



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

Board of EDUCATION AND SERVICES FOR THE BLIND

February 23, 2010

Testimony of:

**Brian S. Sigman
Executive Director
State of Connecticut
Board of Education and Services for the Blind**

**RE: RB 66 -- AN ACT CONCERNING EXPANSION OF THE
LIVERY LICENSE EXEMPTION TO INCLUDE COMMUNITY-
BASED REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SERVICES FOR THE
VISUALLY IMPAIRED**

**Good morning, Senator Doyle, Representative Walker,
Senator Kane, Representative Gibbons and distinguished
members of the Human Services Committee. My name is
Brian Sigman. I am the Executive Director of the Board of
Education and Services for the Blind, or BESB. It is my
privilege to testify before you today in support of Raised Bill
66.**

**As you may know, one of the greatest challenges to the
independence of people who are blind or visually impaired is
access to transportation. With unfortunate and ongoing
frequency, BESB staff hear daily of the lack of transportation
options, particularly in rural areas, for clients of the agency
to access reliable rides for work, grocery shopping, and to be
active participants in their communities. While public transit
and para-transit services do commendable work to cover the**

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higher volume of more densely populated areas, people who do not have a driver's license or use of a vehicle still need help with off-hour trips and ongoing transportation needs for employment.

Regional transportation initiatives, such as those available through the Independent Transportation Network (ITN), grew out of this need. Seeking to fill the transportation void with a host of volunteer drivers who use their personal vehicles to provide rides to senior citizens and people with visual impairments, these grassroots membership organizations have grown to become viable solutions, providing nearly 3,000 rides to more than 150 members in Connecticut in the past year.

When Public Act 05-280 became law in 2005, it recognized the importance of regional transportation services to fill the void that public transit could not address. The law provided grant opportunities to foster the development of regional transportation models. With the passage of Public Act 08-101, livery service license exemptions were provided for these community-based transportation systems to offer rides to senior citizens. Although the ITN mission covers the provision of rides for people with vision impairments in addition to senior citizens, both Public Acts unfortunately left out an explicit reference to people with visual impairment. Therefore, while senior citizens with vision impairments are covered under the conditions of the Public Acts, ambiguity has resulted in regards to individuals who are eligible to receive services under the ITN mission due to vision loss, but who have not yet become senior citizens.

Raised Bill 66 will correct this confusion. It provides a no-cost, technical fix that will align the fundamental purpose of ITN models of transportation with statutory language. I ask

that the Human Services Committee reaffirm the importance of regional transportation service systems for both the elderly and those with vision impairments by favorably passing this bill.

Thank you for your kind consideration and interest. I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Sigman', written in a cursive style.

Brian S. Sigman, CRC

Executive Director

Board of Education and Services for the Blind